

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2417

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LA PAZ 7472

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY KATZ AND AMBASSADOR VANCE S/NM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PORG PGOV UNCTAD SNAR BL

SUBJ: MINISTER LECHIN'S MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY KATZ
SEPTEMBER 23

1. BOLIVIAN MINISTER OF COORDINATION AND PLANNING, GENERAL JUAN LECHIN, TOLD ME DURING A BRIEF CONVERSATION AT THE AIRPORT ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, THAT HE MIGHT RAISE WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY KATZ A REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN ENCOURAGING US PRIVATE COFFEE IMPORTERS TO ENTER INTO LONG-TERM PURCHASE CONTRACTS WITH BOLIVIAN SUPPLIERS AS A MEANS OF STIMULATING THEM TO SWITCH OUT OF COCOALEAF PRODUCTION. THE MINISTER MENTIONED ALSO THAT HE MIGHT PROPOSE SIMILAR ASSISTANCE BY THE USG ON COCOA PRODUCTION.

2. THIS IDEA OF OFFICIAL US ENCOURAGEMENT OF OUR PRIVATE IMPORTERS TO ENTER INTO LONGER-TERM CONTRACTS SURFACED DURING THE FINAL MEETING OF NARCOTICS SURVEY TEAM LEADER, RONALD NICHOLSON, S/NM, WITH THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND INTERIOR AND WAS REPORTED IN LA PAZ 7396.

3. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH COFFEE PRODUCERS WHO TELL

US THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO REDUCE COCA PRODUCTION AND STEP UP COFFEE PLANTING IF THEY CAN SEE A GUARANTEED MARKET IN THE FUTURE. THEY HAVE TALKED MORE ABOUT THE ABILITY TO BE ABLE TO SELL RATHER THAN THE PRICE AT WHICH THEY WOULD SELL. OVER THE PAST WEEK END THE COFFEE PRODUCERS IN THE YUNGAS AREA MET IN LA
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PAZ AND, ACCORDING TO RADIO REPORTS, FORMED A COFFEE PRODUCERS

ASSOCIATION AND ELECTED OFFICERS. AMONG THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE NEW ASSOCIATION WAS A PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF THEIR DESIRE TO STEP UP COFFEE OUTPUT IN SUBSTITUTION FOR COCA LEAF. THIS MANIFESTATION PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY WHICH WE HOPE WASHINGTON WILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST US IN EXPLOITING.

4. I HOPE THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE A FORTH-COMING RESPONSE TO MINISTER LECHIN IF HE RAISES THE SUBJECT AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.
STEDMAN

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